

a country which, according to St. John's description, is a perfect desert. Huntington shows, further, that Seistan was formerly much more densely peopled, as is evident from the numerous ruins. Quotations from older and more recent descriptions show that the climate in south-eastern Persia and south-western Baluchistan is in a period of increasing drought. He found two terraces at heights of 15 and 25 feet respectively round the Hamun basin, but he recognises that the desiccation does not proceed steadily and regularly, for Kuh-i-khoja, in the middle of the lake, was once connected with the shore.

Huntington summarises his views in the following chief points. Of the four provinces Khorasan, Azerbeijan, Kerman, and Seistan, the first has suffered more than any other part of the country from war, but yet is one of the most densely populated. Azerbeijan is the next to have been most harried, and yet it is the most densely peopled province of Persia. Seistan has been less devastated, but its population has been decimated far more than that of the other two corners of the country. Kerman has suffered least from war, but it is full of ruined towns, and its population has very seriously decreased. Therefore neither war nor bad government are to blame for the great reduction in the number of the people, and only a deterioration in the climate can account for it.

This view was expressed long before by Blanford, who believes that the country was at one time full of lakes in which the alluvium of the existing plains was deposited.

Blanford believes also that Persia was much more densely populated 2000 years ago, and better cultivated, than in our day.

It is not easy to arrive at a satisfactory solution of these questions. E. Tietze, so thoroughly familiar with the geology of northern Persia, emphatically opposes Blanford's theories. He says: "The signs of decay are certainly unmistakable in Persia, but this decay has causes quite apart from climatic variations; and even if a larger proportion of the area of Persia was cultivated in former times, this indicates greater industry and a better administration